



Route 9 East Visioning Process

Wednesday October 28th, 2015

Brookline Town Hall

**MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning
11.360 Community Growth and Land Use Planning**

1

Introduction and Context

Project Team

Faculty Instructors

- Susan Silberberg
- Terry Tzold

Students

- Amy Plovnick
- Asresh Guttikonda
- Carolina Hollman
- Devon Neary
- Ellen Morris
- Elliot Kilham
- Jon Campbell
- Paige Peltzer
- Sasha Shyduroff
- Saul Wilson
- Tatjana Trebic

Who we are: Group of 11 students from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT

Class: Community Growth and Land Use Planning

Goals of Class:

- Explore the techniques, processes, and personal and professional skills required to effectively manage growth and land use change.
- Provide students the opportunity to develop integrated planning solutions within the constraints of real-world settings and scenarios.



Project Scope

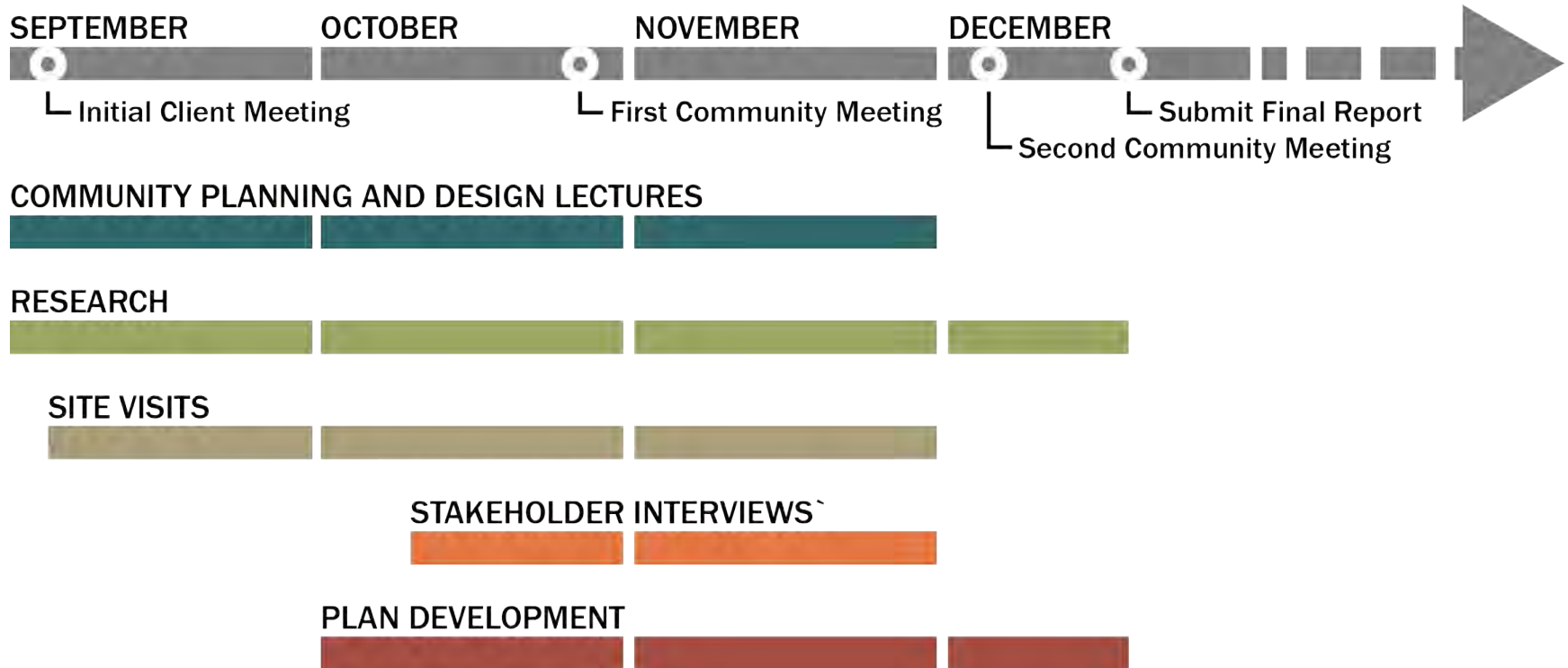
- The Town of Brookline has engaged this class to develop a vision for the Route 9 East Corridor in the town, explore several land use scenarios, and submit a recommended plan and associated implementation strategies to make the vision a reality.

We bring...

- Fresh perspective
- Bold ideas
- Variety of Experiences and Interests



Project Timeline



Meeting Objectives

- To present **initial findings** about transit, land use, and area design to the community in order to provide shared context for the project.
- To present **potential ideas and recommendations** in order to gain feedback and responses from the community.
- To **build relationships** with community members and key stakeholders and build our team's understanding of the concerns, challenges and opportunities as seen by the community.
- To **create new ideas** with community members in a collaborative way.

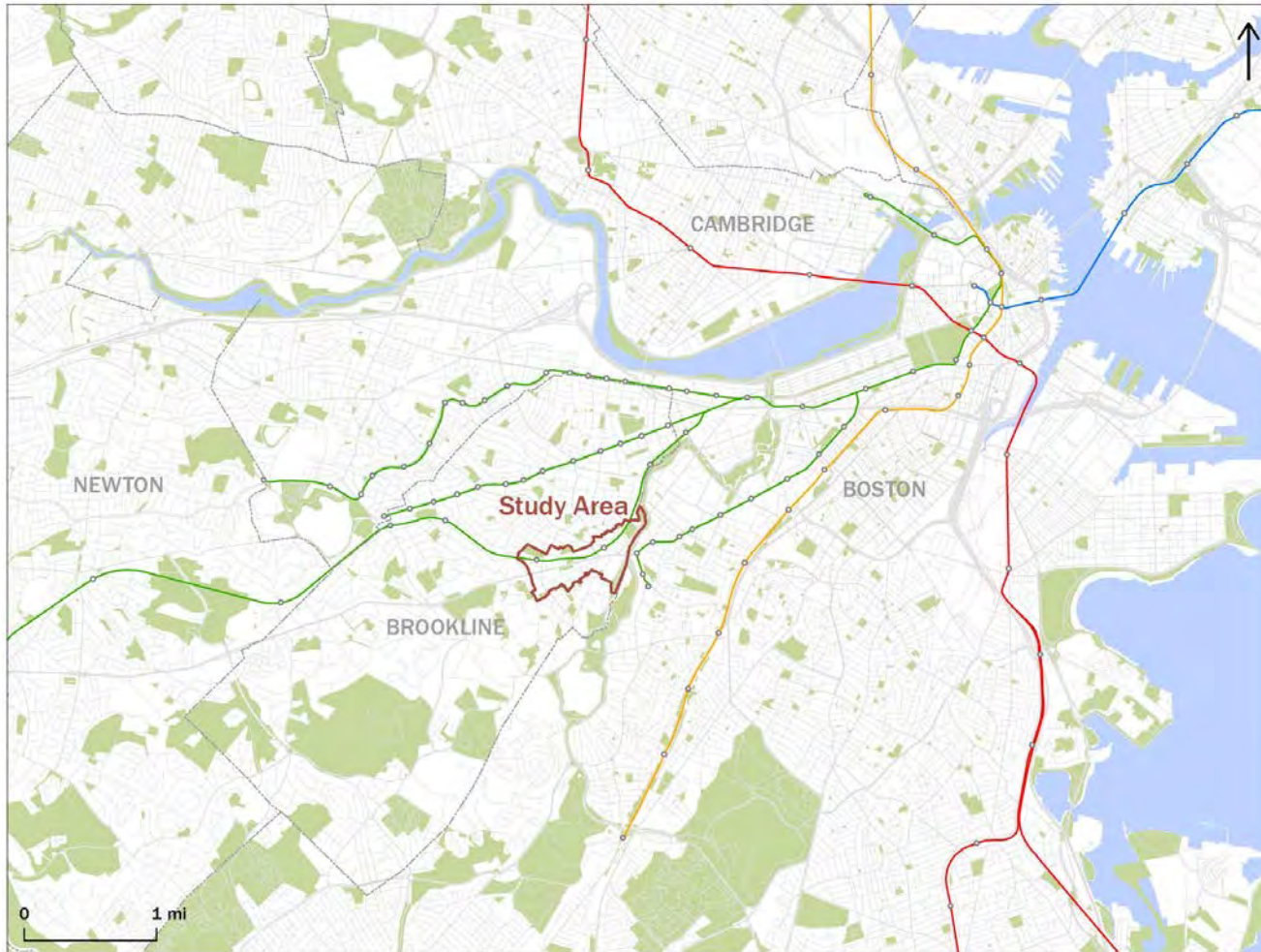


Meeting Agenda

- Introduction and Context
- Project Vision and Goals
- Initial Findings
 - Assets
 - Challenges
- Framing the Vision
- Community Input
- Next Steps
- Questions and Answers



Project Study Area: Broader Context



Project Study Area



What's in the Works?

1. Gateway East – *Planning/Design*
2. Brookline Place – *Ready for Construction*
3. New England Treatment Access- *Construction*
4. Homewood Suites Hotel - *Construction*
5. Audi Dealership – *Planning/Design*



Project Goals

- Expand the tax base and increase commercial and retail activity.
- Increase housing supply as feasible.
- Improve safety and access for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular modes of transportation.
- Enhance the public realm and visual environment.



Vision Statement (First Take)

By 2035, Route 9 East will be a lively and cohesive destination, connecting the surrounding neighborhoods with multimodal transportation, innovative commercial uses, and inviting public spaces.



2

Initial Findings



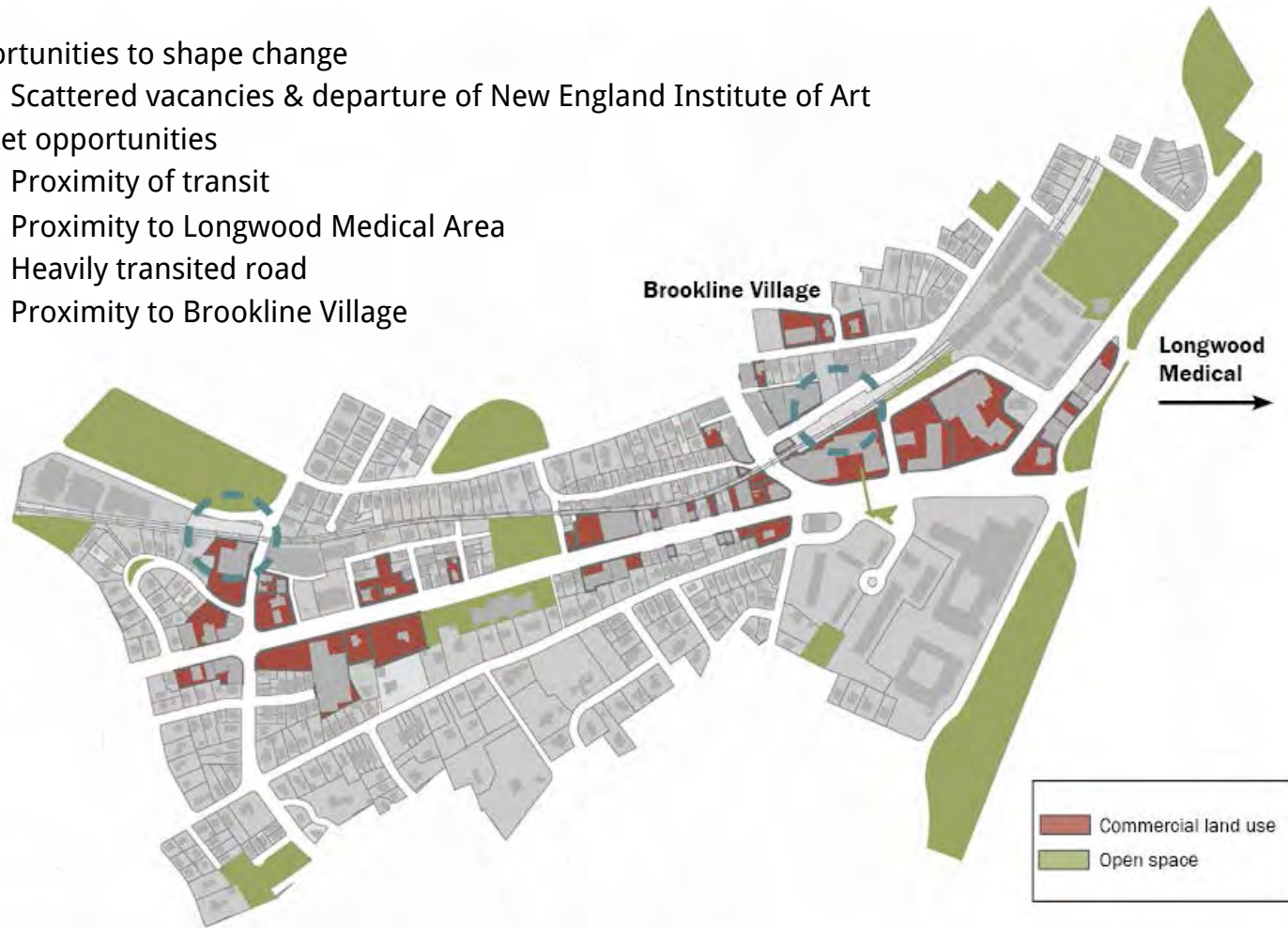
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Assets

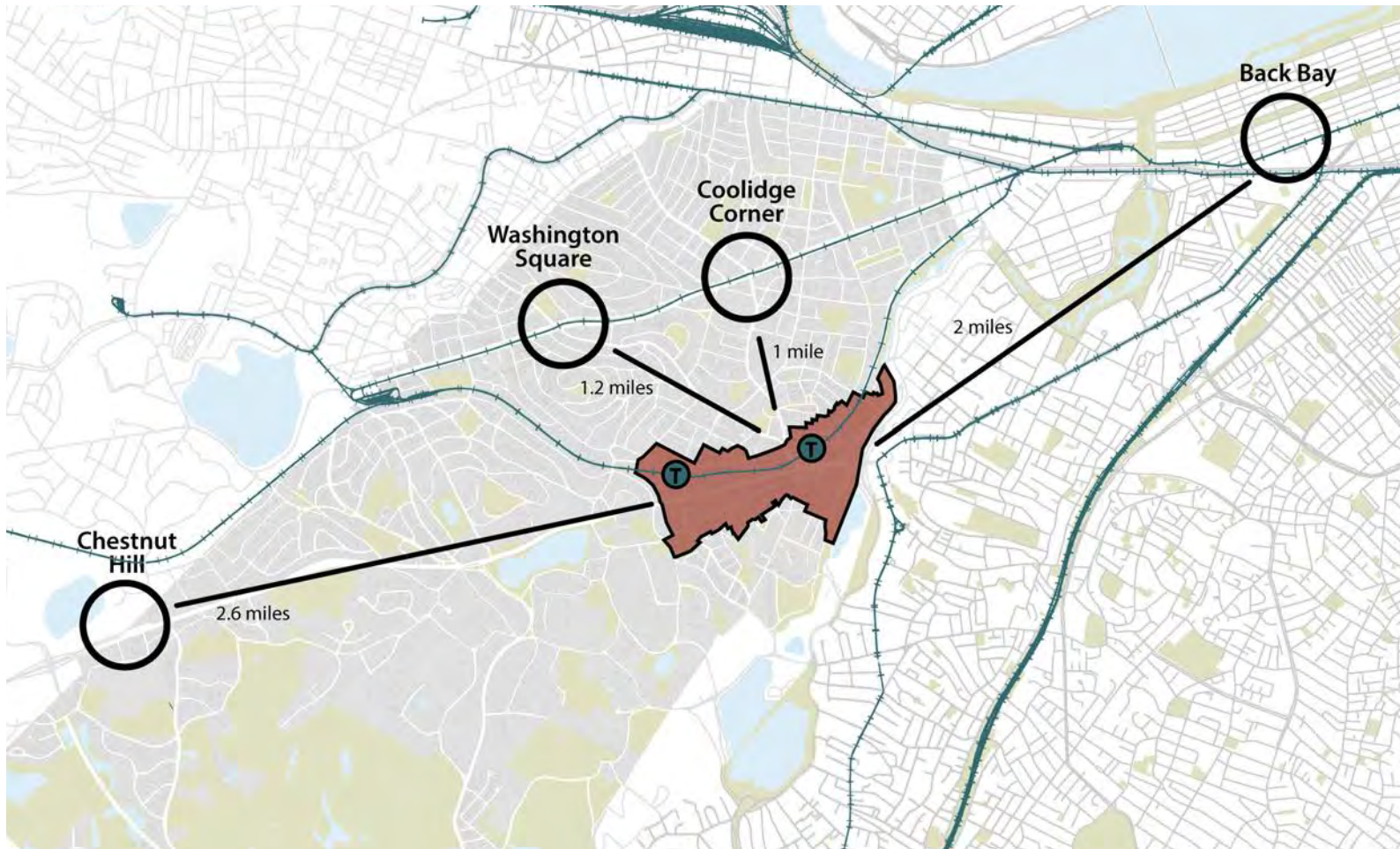


Asset: Location

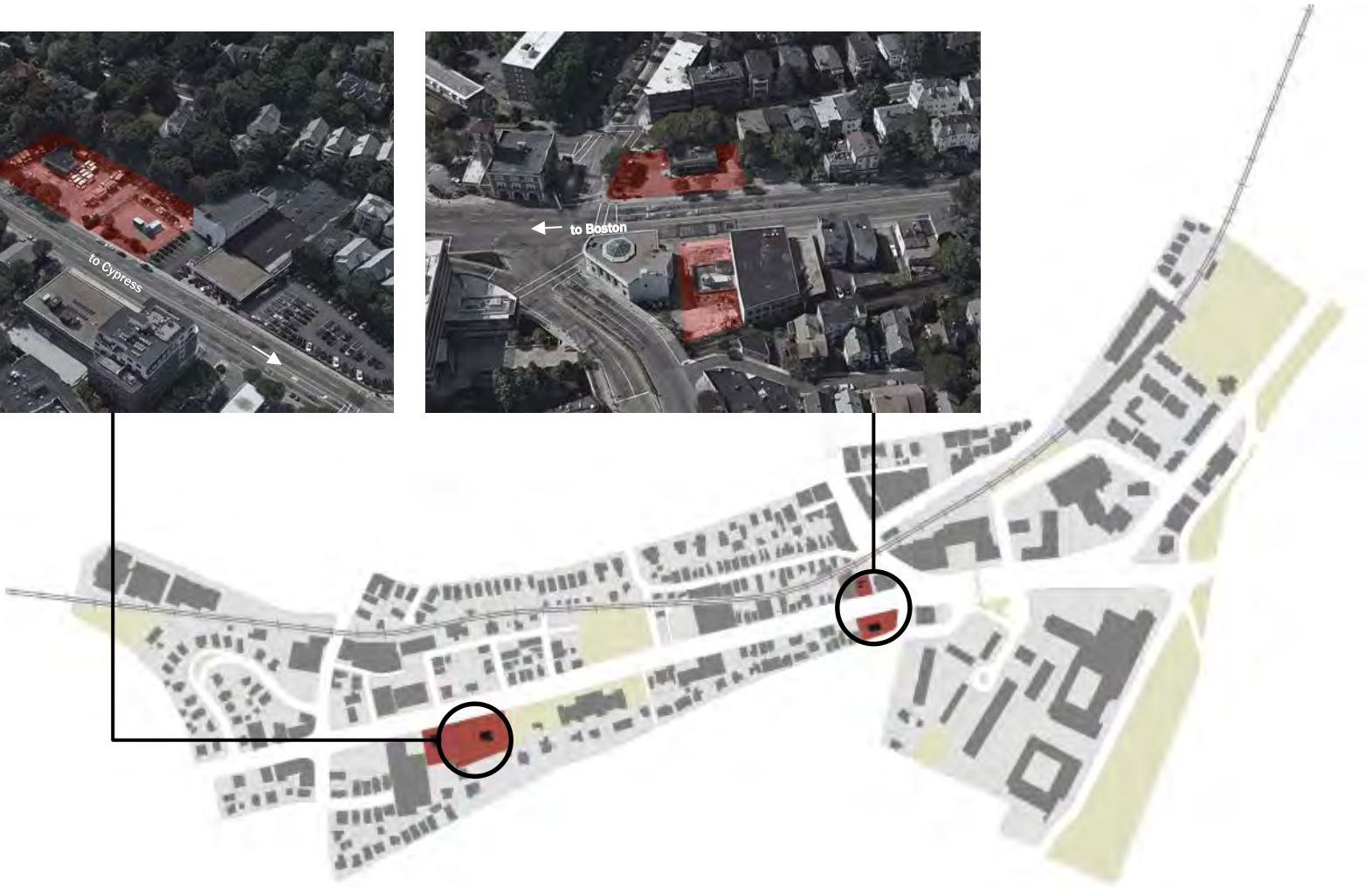
- Opportunities to shape change
 - Scattered vacancies & departure of New England Institute of Art
- Market opportunities
 - Proximity of transit
 - Proximity to Longwood Medical Area
 - Heavily transited road
 - Proximity to Brookline Village



Asset: Location



Asset: Opportunity to Grow



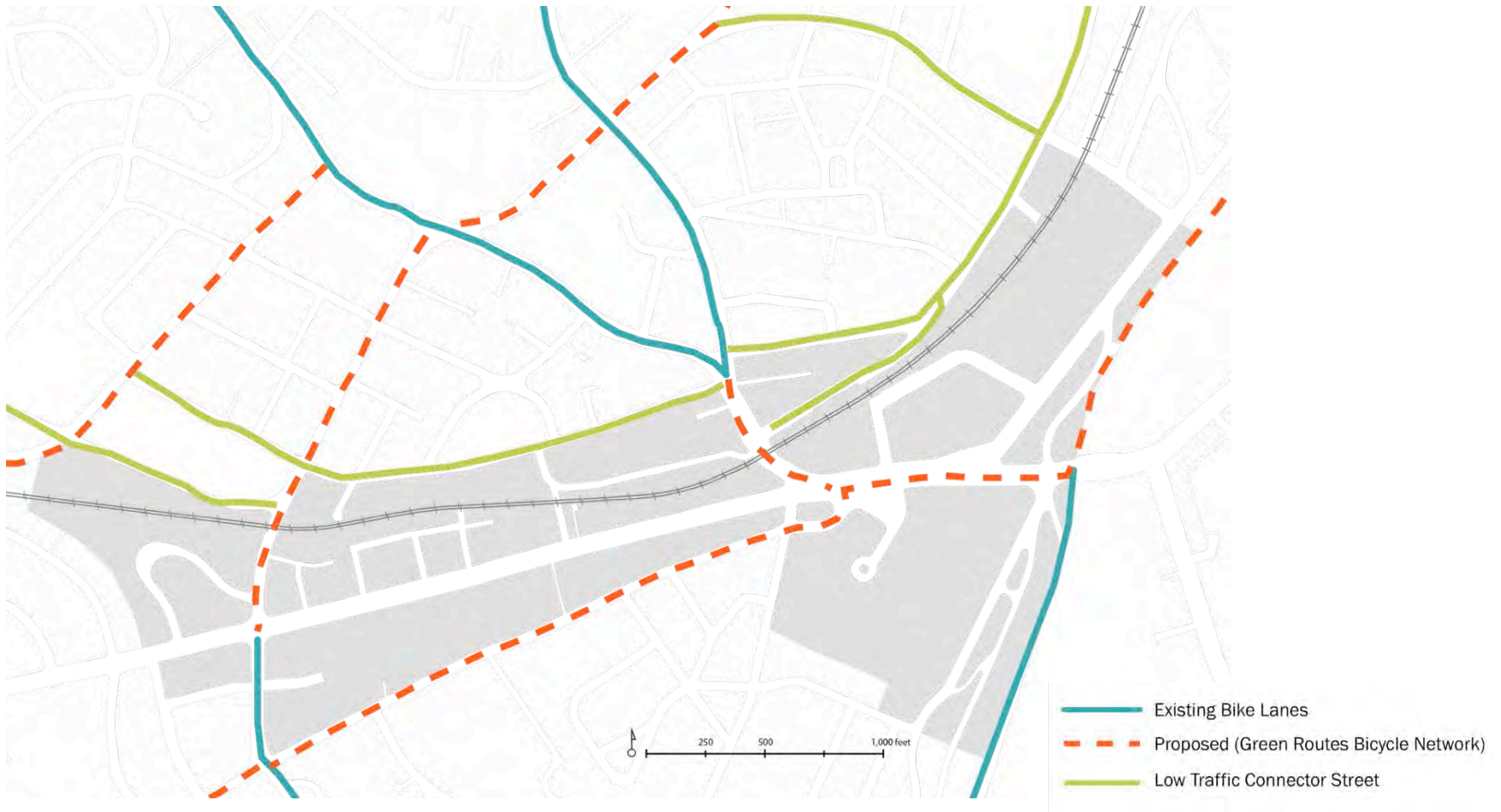
Asset: Iconic Buildings



- Provide visual interest
- Act as landmarks and help with orientation along the corridor
- If public ownership: more control



Asset: Proposed Bicycle Network



Asset: Proximity to Emerald Necklace



Existing conditions



A photograph of a city street during the day. On the left, a row of cars is parked along the curb. Behind them are trees with green and some yellowing leaves. In the background, a brick building is visible. On the right, a modern building with large glass windows is partially visible. The street is paved and has a white line marking. The overall scene is bright and clear.

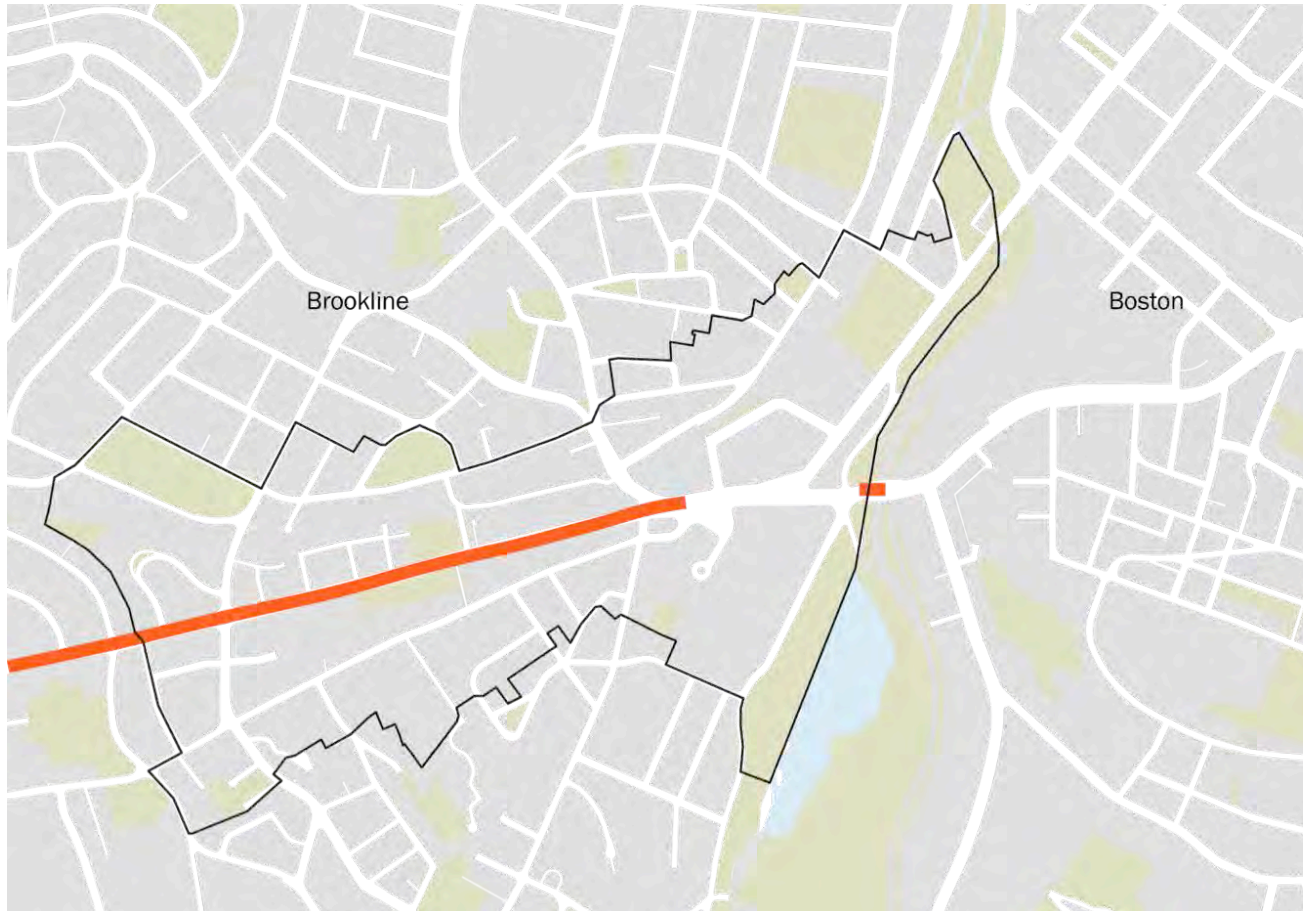
2.2

Challenges

Challenge: Existing Zoning



Challenge: State Highway



Stakeholder Comments

"A 'run for your life' experience"

"Unfriendly, anti-pedestrian environment"

"My youngest son actually loves walking on Route 9... which terrifies me"

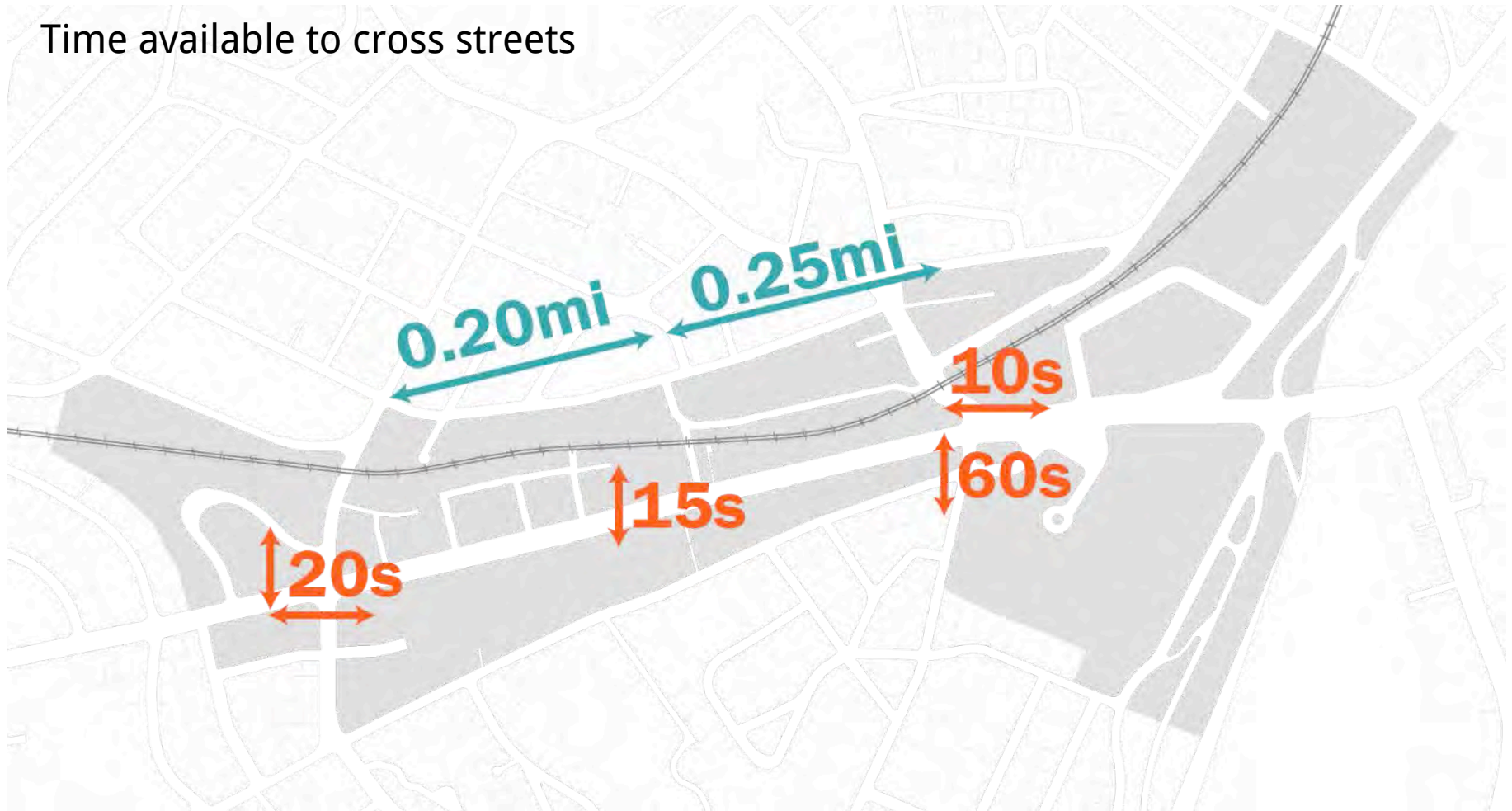
Challenge: Passive Street Design

Route 9 East @ Washington St

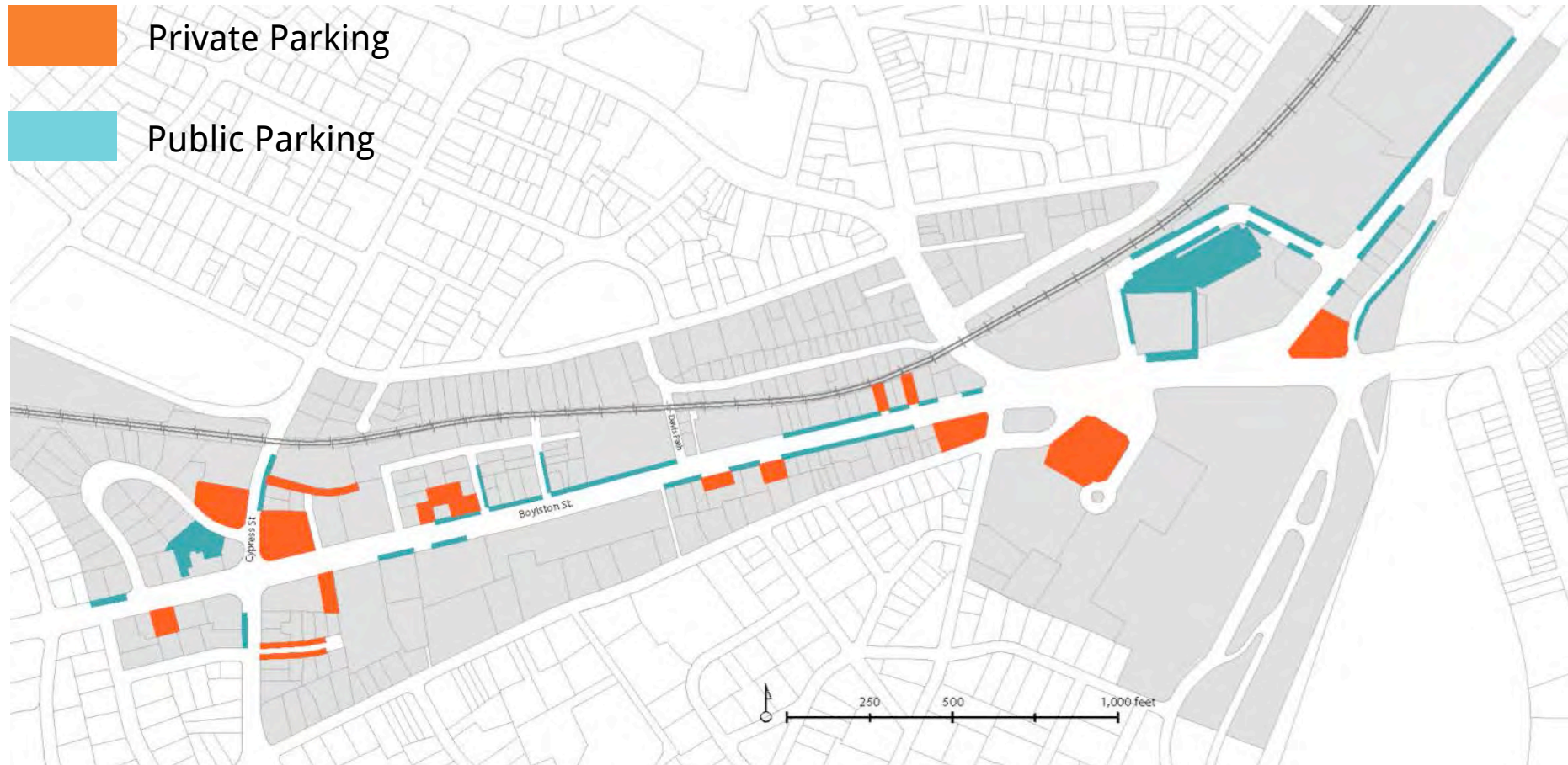


Challenge: Pedestrian Experience

Time available to cross streets

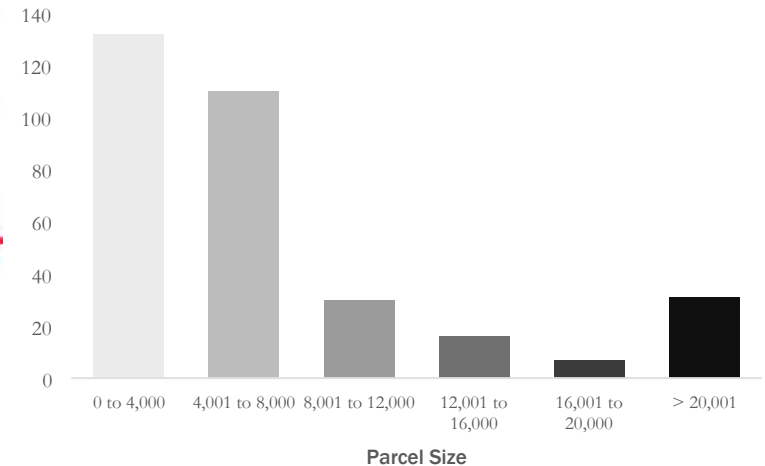


Challenge: Limited Parking



Challenge: Physical Barriers & Small Parcels

Stakeholder Comment - *"We have no synergy/connective tissue, no clustering, we just have islands."*



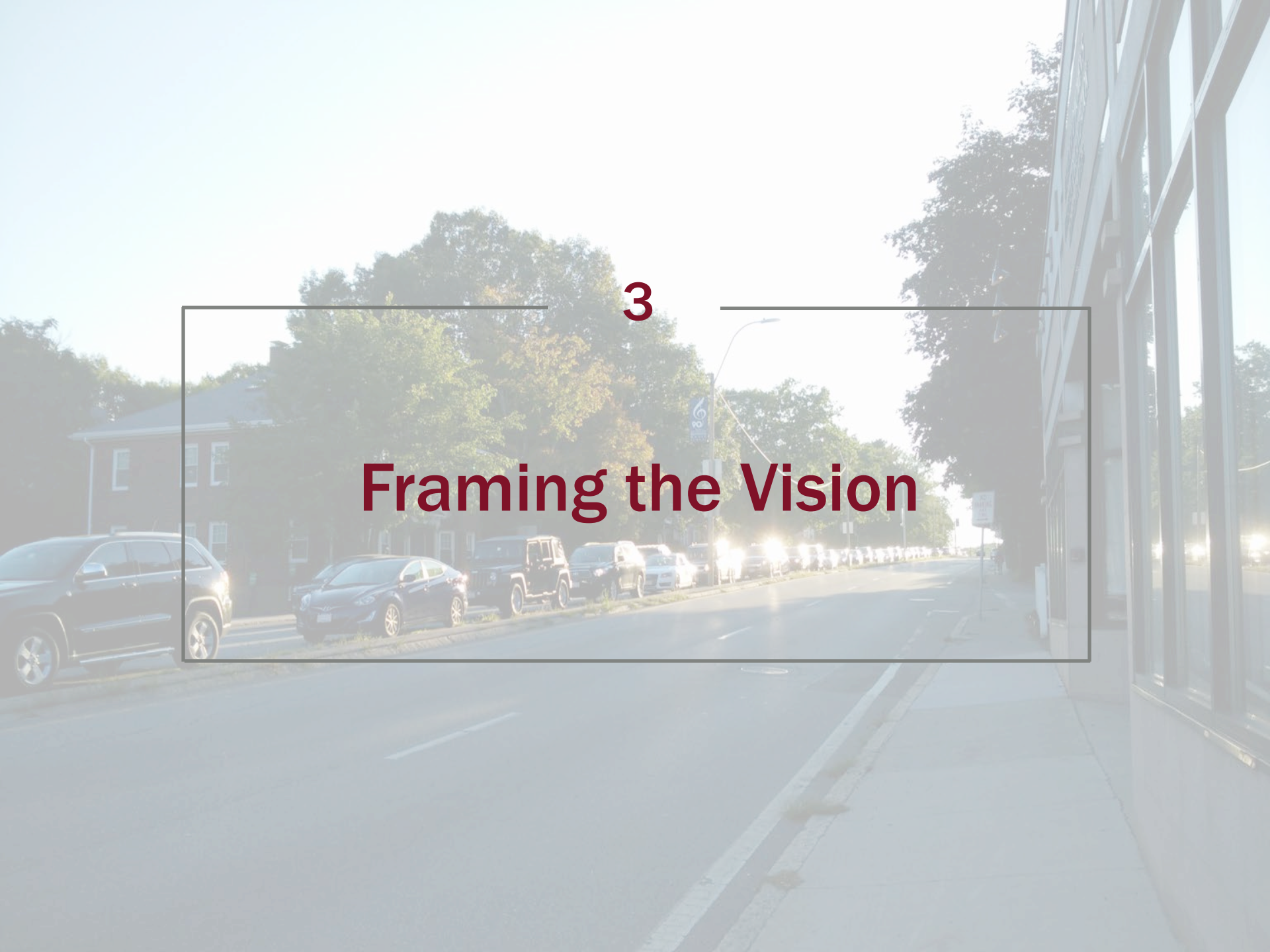
Why problems persist on Route 9 East?

- Shallow and narrow parcels
 - Limited Parking
 - Narrow sidewalks
 - High speed heavy through-traffic
 - Limits of existing zoning
- Limited attractiveness for investment and development
 - Lack of cohesive character with surrounding neighborhoods



3

Framing the Vision



Building the Vision

By 2035, Route 9 will be a lively and cohesive destination, connecting the surrounding neighborhoods with multimodal transportation, innovative commercial uses, and inviting public spaces.

Benefits

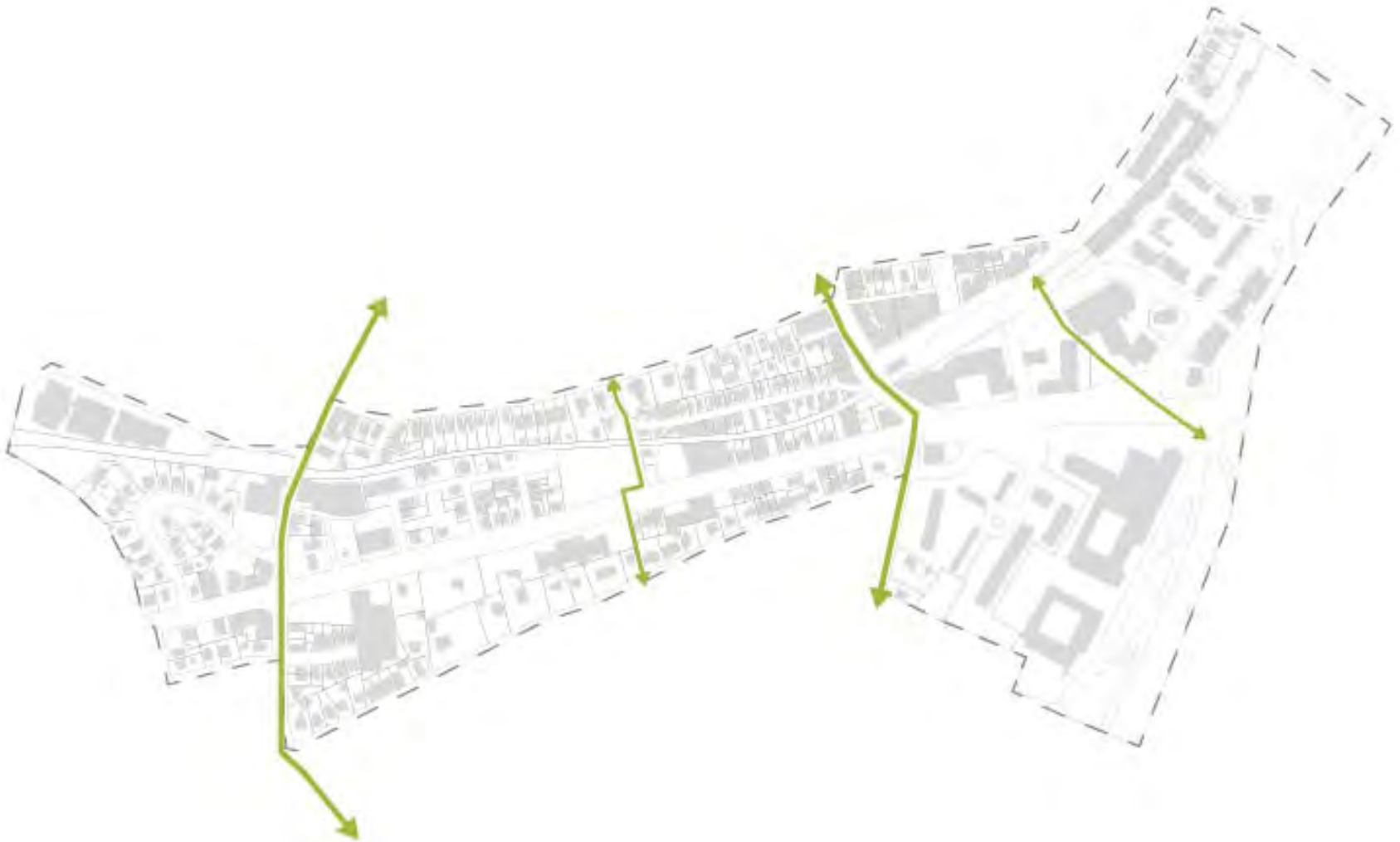
- Neighborhood amenities
- Increased tax base
- Improved visual character/neighborhood aesthetics

Challenges

- Increased traffic
- Increased parking demands
- Potential impacts to abutters



Short Term



Medium Term



Long Term



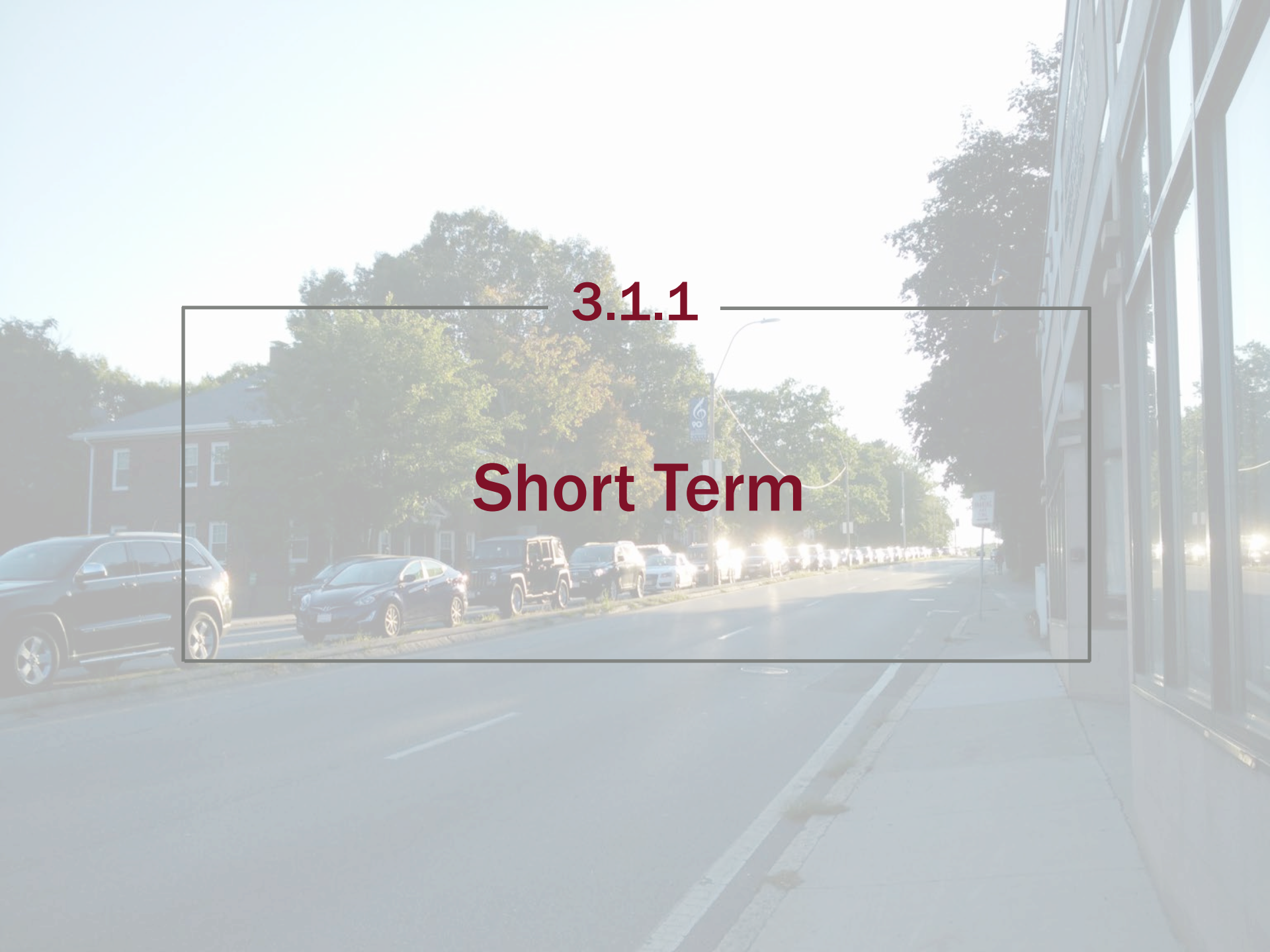
A photograph of a city street during the day. On the left, a row of cars is parked along the curb. Behind them are large, leafy trees. In the background, a brick building is visible. On the right side of the image, a modern building with large glass windows is partially visible. The overall scene is bright and clear.

3.1

Preliminary Thoughts

3.1.1

Short Term



Navigating the State Highway

Proposing Changes to a State Highway

Who can propose changes?

- MassDOT
- Town of Brookline

What standards must be followed?

- MassHighway Project Development and Design Guide

What if we have other ideas?

NACTO Urban Design Standards Design Exceptions



Sidewalk Improvements

Parklets



Jamaica Plain, MA

Curb Extensions



Hoboken, NJ

Stakeholder Comment - *"I would love to see that stretch of roadway be a little more friendly...to engender some civic pride, become sort of a meeting place for two neighborhoods on either side...move away from car oriented uses, get more pedestrians on the roadway, cafes, etc."*



Site Examples

Painted Intersection @ Cypress St.



Curb Ext + Crosswalk @ Walnut Path



Signage



Temporary and Permanent Signage can connect cyclists and pedestrians to new destinations.

Left: Raleigh, NC | Center: Berkeley, CA | Right: Brookline, MA (Proposed)

Public Art



“Intersection Repair”
combines public art
with street calming
Ex: Los Angeles, CA



Murals transform blank
facades into colorful
community assets
Ex: Provo, UT

“Chair bombing” adds
temporary seating to
public spaces
Ex: New Zealand

Pop-Up Events



Outdoor pop-up events showcase underutilized parcels.

Left: Louisville, KY
Right: Washington, DC



Retail pop-ups activate vacant storefronts and let prospective tenants test-run locations.

Left & Right:
New York, NY

Where could this Happen?

Intersection Repair
@ Cypress Street



Destination Signage
@ Davis + Walnut Paths



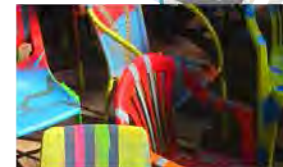
Brookline Mural
@ Emerald Necklace



Pop-Up Storefront
@ Cypress Street



Outdoor Movie Night
@ Old Lincoln School

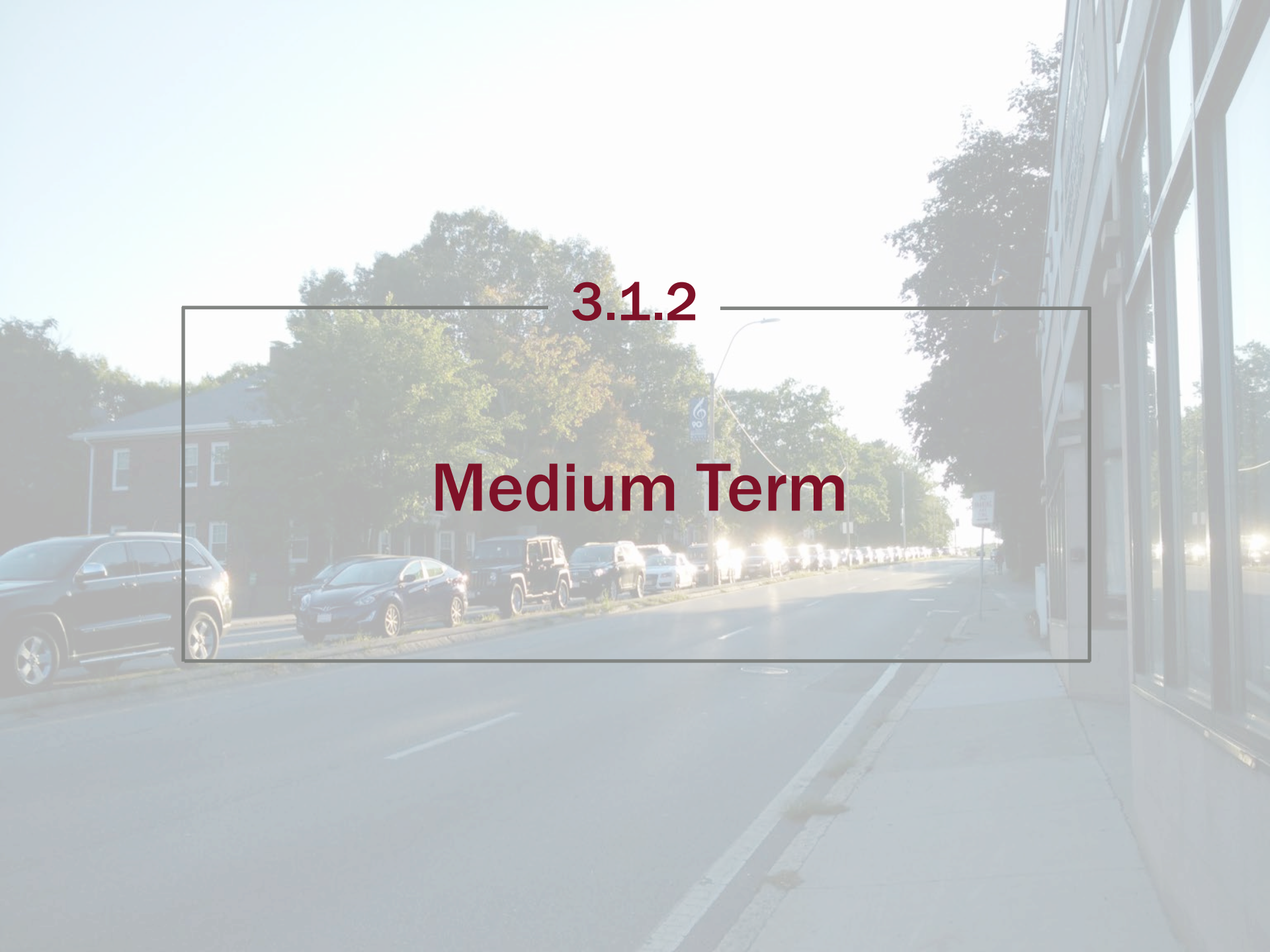


Chair Bombing
@ Washington Street



3.1.2

Medium Term



Façade Improvements

	Brookline	Cambridge
Type	0% interest loan	50% matching grant
Amount	Up to \$10,000	\$2,500 to \$35,000
Coverage	Exterior painting, signage, awnings, lighting, windows/door, façade restoration, minor landscaping.	Façade improvements in addition to ADA (up to \$15,000); signage, lighting, awning (up to \$2,500)
Technical assistance	None mentioned. Design fee of up to 10% of project cost may be covered.	Yes: consultant through design stage at no cost
Additional incentives	Bonus score for energy efficiency	ADA improvements 90% reimbursed



Façade Improvements



Before



After



Cambridge: The Storefront Improvement Program

Stakeholder Comment - *"We need a big emphasis on beautification of storefronts. Every so often the town could nudge people to do something about their storefronts to help beautify the town."*

Businesses



- Design, prototyping, and new manufacturing
- Retail or showroom component



Businesses



Stakeholder Comment - *"There isn't a favorite destination there for me – I don't use any businesses other than La Morra restaurant."*

- Artisan grocery, retailers, and restaurants
- Classes offered to community



Adaptive Reuse of Schools

	Pros	Cons
Housing	Generate demand for local retail. Subsidies for affordable housing. Esp. senior → 40B target without added stress on schools.	Floor plans may be difficult to adapt and lead to wasted space.
Commercial	Significant addition to commercial stock, large enough to become a destination. PPP opportunity.	Loss of a public asset, community influence (although community can be engaged)
Cultural Center	Continues to serve the community, potential to link to education.	Opportunity cost in terms of tax revenue/ potential commercial uses



Adaptive Reuse of Schools

Old Lincoln School



Affordable Senior Housing



Hotel + Brewery+ Pub+ Movie Theater

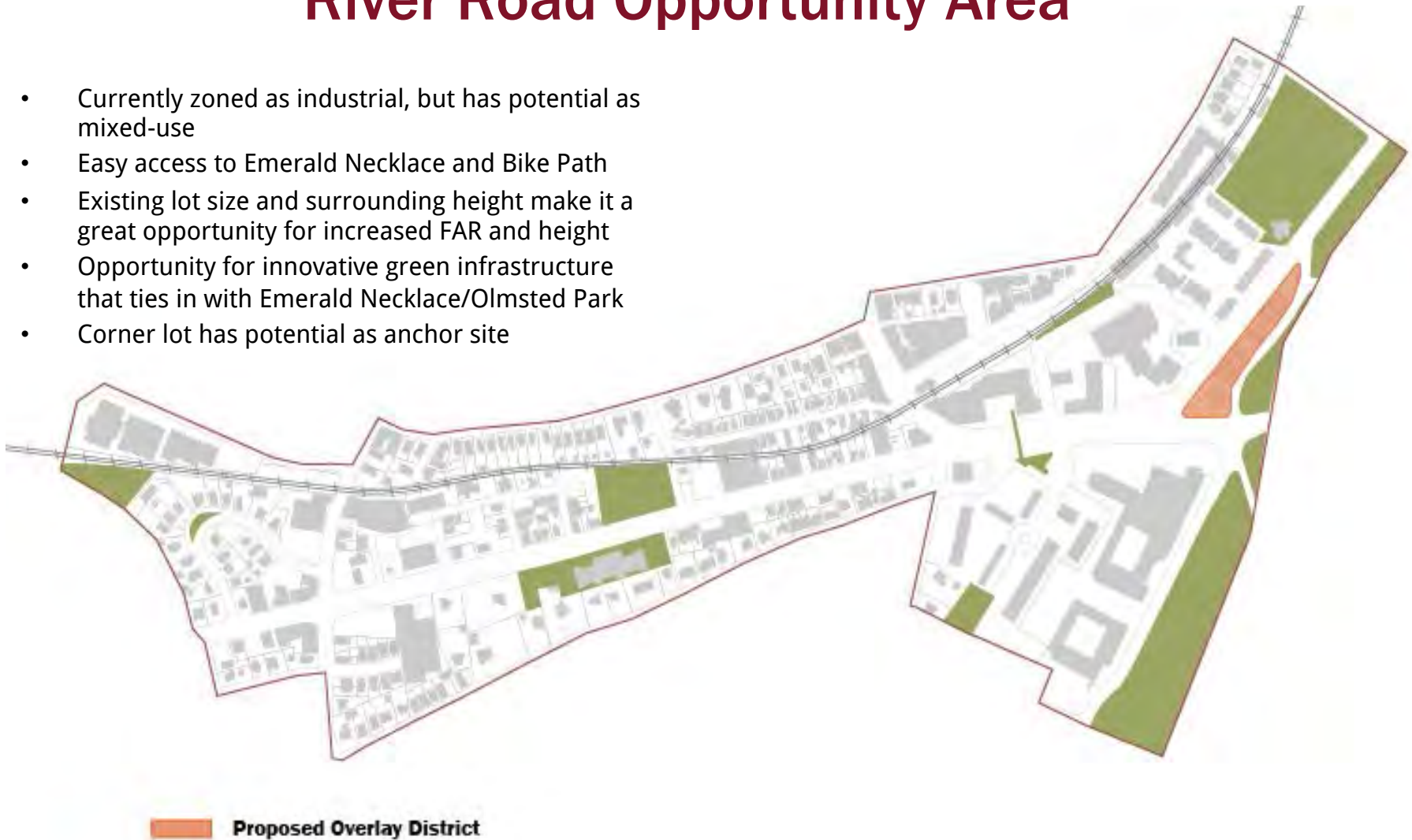


Arts and Cultural Center



River Road Opportunity Area

- Currently zoned as industrial, but has potential as mixed-use
- Easy access to Emerald Necklace and Bike Path
- Existing lot size and surrounding height make it a great opportunity for increased FAR and height
- Opportunity for innovative green infrastructure that ties in with Emerald Necklace/Olmsted Park
- Corner lot has potential as anchor site



Flood Resistant Mixed Commercial

Corner of Washington St. and
Brookline Avenue



Maker Space



- Community access to equipment and machinery for technology and arts
- Studio and classroom space
- Economic and job development opportunity
- Former Brownfield Site

Where could this Happen?

Facade Improvement
@ Cypress Street



Arts & Culture
on Route 9



Flood-Resistant Design
@ River Rd



Adaptive Reuse
@ Old Lincoln School



Clean Manufacturing/Maker
Space @ River Road

3.1.3

Long Term



Complete Streets: Option 1

Route 9 East @ Washington St

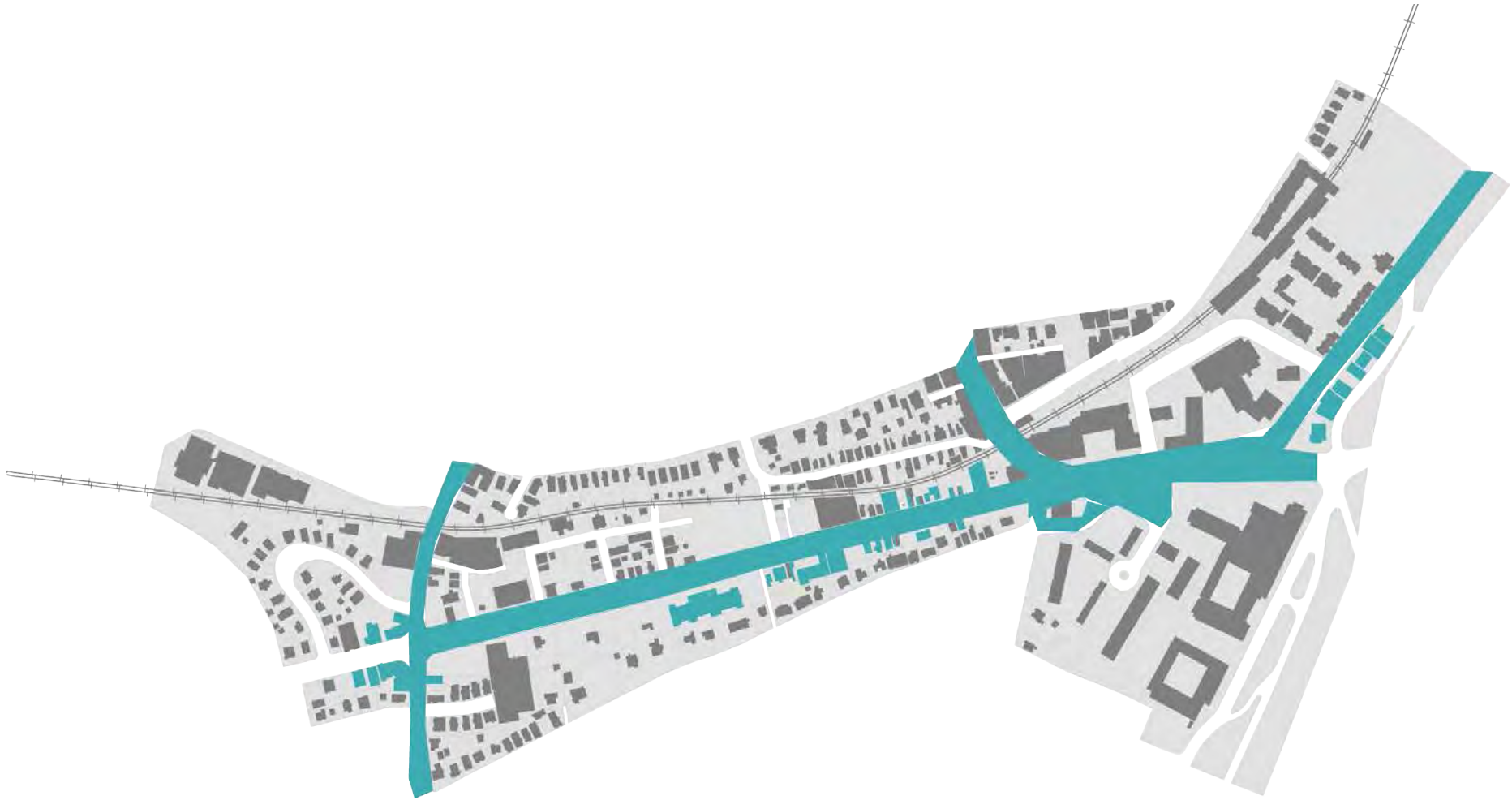


Complete Streets: Option 2

Route 9 East @ Washington St



Where could this Happen?



4

Tools for Implementation

Land Assembly

- Challenge of infill development due to small, oddly-shaped parcels
- Developers typically assemble larger sites from smaller parcels
- Owners of the last parcel needed to assemble the site can extract significant concessions
- Incentives encourage site assembly and willing participation of current property owners
- Larger developable parcels make it easier to require public benefit incentives



Land Assembly



5 Story Residential



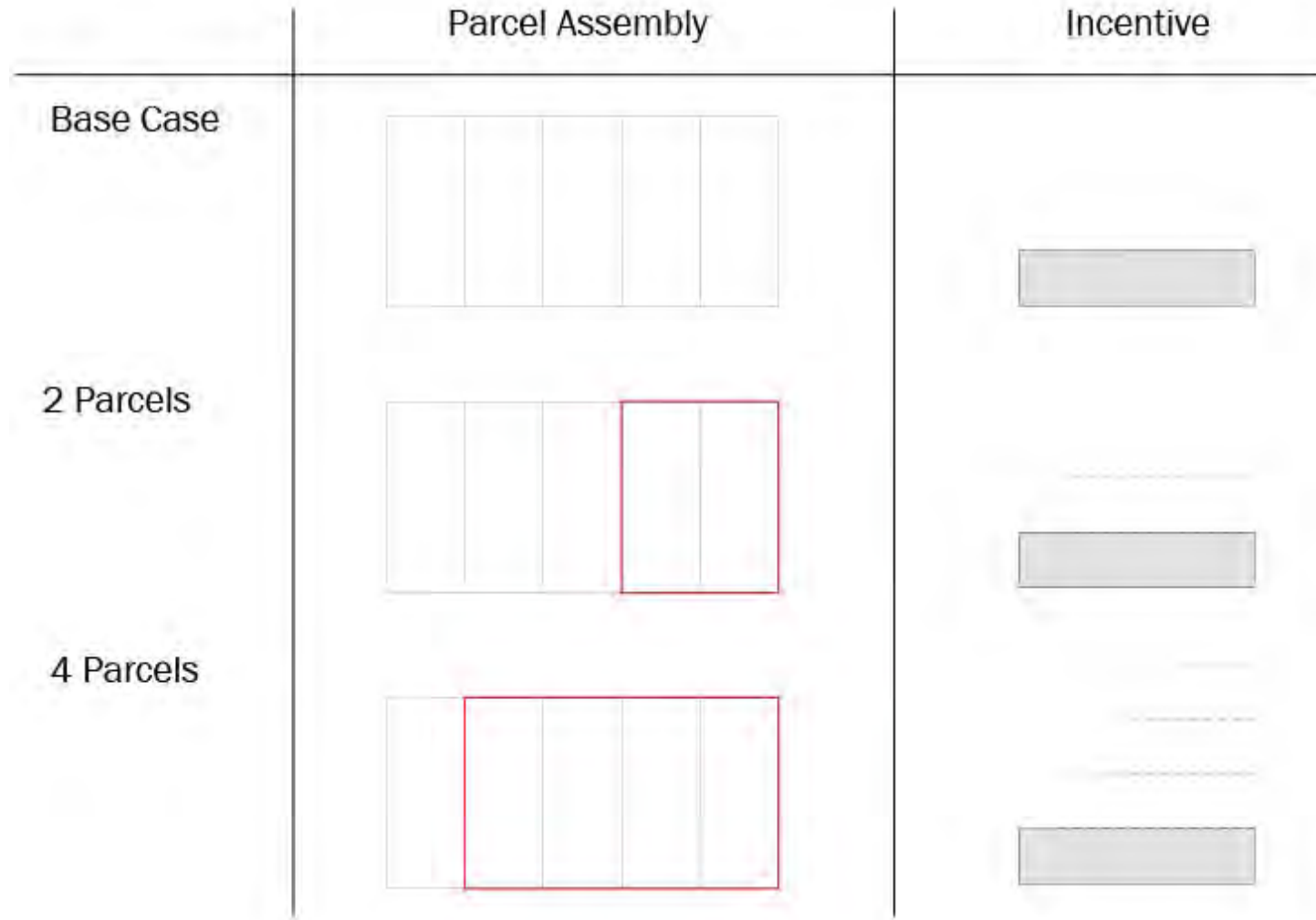
Small Office



Typical Residential
(Double Loaded Corridor)



Example Land Assembly Program



Graduated Density Zoning

- Allows jurisdictions to keep lower-density zoning for sites less than a target parcel size
- Owners are motivated to sell if value of assembled parcels at higher density greatly exceeds the current value of their parcel alone
- Policy Options
 - Abrupt → Creates a stronger incentive for last owner to sell as density bonus is not achieved without last parcel
 - Sliding Scale → Stronger incentive for initial owners to sell



Zoning Recommendations

Amendments to existing zoning districts

- For parcels fronting Route 9 East



Zoning Recommendations

New overlay district

Model after Davis Path Special District:

- Increase FAR to 3.0 for uses with retail on ground floor
- FAR 2.25 for other uses
- Angled plane on North side of street
- Parking same as Davis Path District
- 2% of construction costs → public benefits (public realm improvements, street trees, shared parking)



Zoning Recommendations

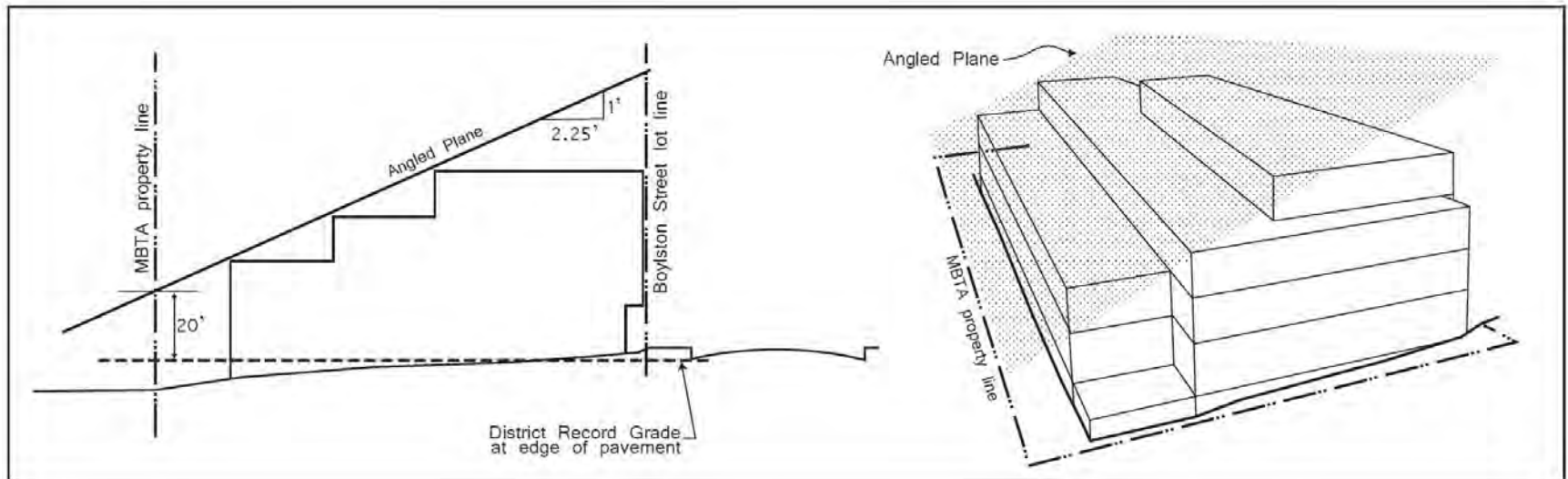
3.0 FAR



2.9 FAR

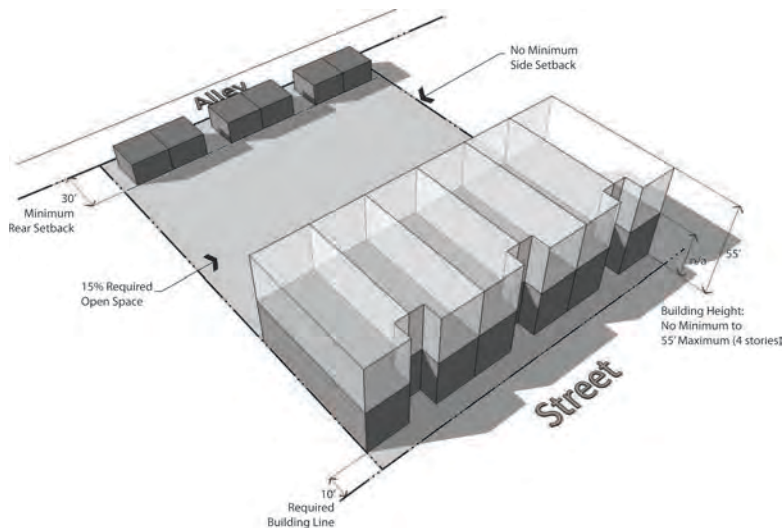


357 Boylston St. - 3.97 FAR



Zoning Recommendations

- Shift to more Form Based Zoning to specify what the town desires new development to look like in relation to the context; place making
- Proposed development projects should undergo site plan and design review
- Encourage mixed-use development with FAR bonuses



Form-Based Zoning Code

Mixed Use Development

Parking Recommendations

Shared Parking Ordinance:

Two or more parties share the same parking spaces by taking into account different peak demands.

Example:

Dunkin Donuts parking only (6AM-10AM); open to the public during off-peak hours

Parking Requirements:

Require new or upgrading developments to include public parking spots;

Or, require developers to pay into a fund to be used for building public parking rather than providing parking spaces

Example:

Audi Expansion to include public parking

Parking Garages:

Consider new locations for public parking garages

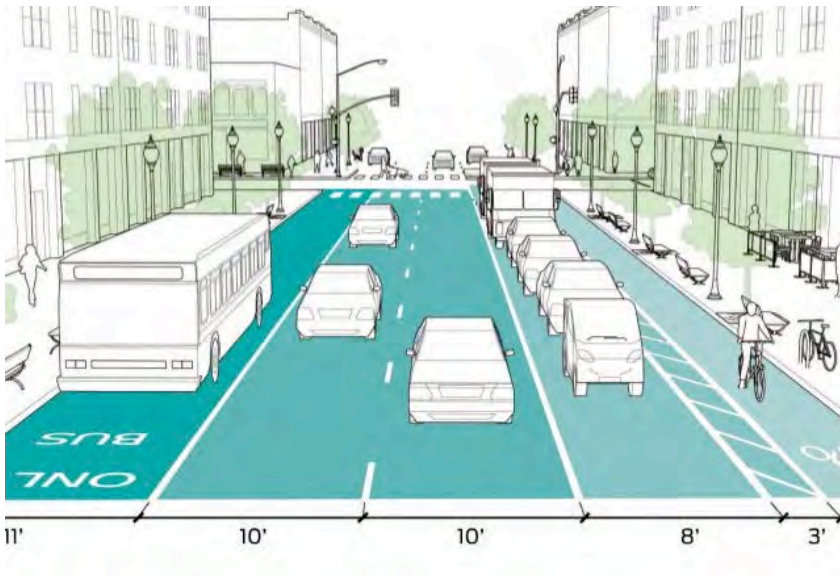
Example:

Elevate Boylston Street Playground to street level and place parking below



Street Improvements

Narrower Lanes



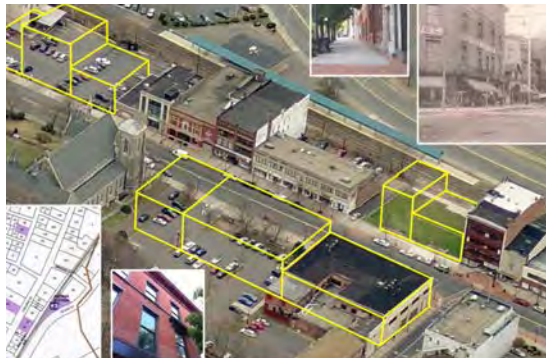
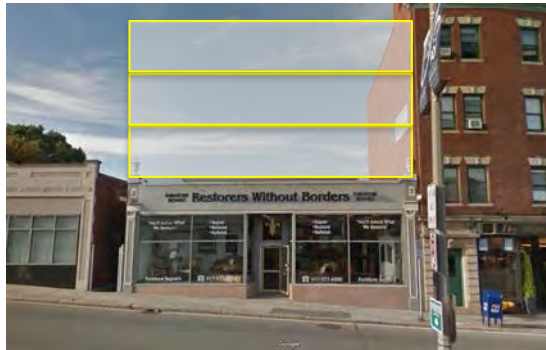
Clearly Marked Pedestrian Zones



NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide*



Long Term Vision



5

Engaging You



Your Ideas

- We want to document your reactions and ideas to inform our further research
- Move to the table number listed on your nametag and grab a pen or marker

Group Activity Schedule:

Step 1: Reactions to the presentation: 10 minutes

Step 2: Generation of ideas: 15 minutes

Step 3: Summarizing your group's ideas: 5 minutes

- We will reconvene in 30 minutes to share back



Reimagining Route 9

Step 1: Your reactions to the presentation and the proposals

Answer:

- Which recommendations did you like the most/least?
- What in the presentation was spot-on? What was totally off-base?
- Was anything omitted that should have been addressed?

You have **10 minutes** for Step 1



Reimagining Route 9

Step 2: Idea Generation

Imagine and co-create:

- Which do you think would be easy wins? What could the community agree + town be able to act on in the relatively short term (aka the next few years)? Where? How?
- What vision do you have for two, three decades from now? What do you want this place to be/to represent? How do you want people to experience this place in the future? What changes would that entail? Where? How?
- What challenges would Brookline face in implementing these ideas? How would you address these challenges?

You have **15 minutes** for Step 2



Reimagining Route 9

Step 3: Plan a 1 minute summary

- Summarize your group's 1 or 2 most interesting/compelling ideas for Route 9 to bring back to the larger group
 - Choose a group representative to present your ideas
-
- You have **5 minutes** for Step 3



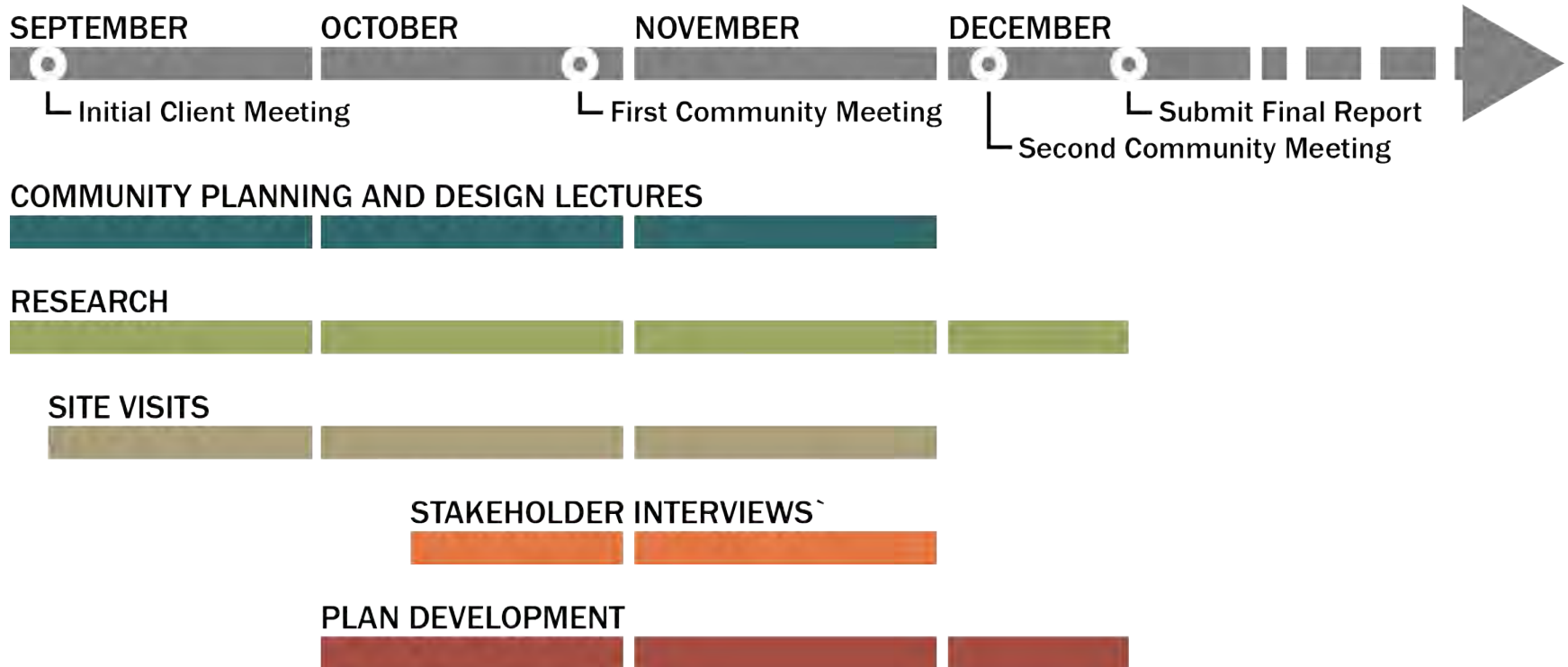
Regroup and share

Step 4: Rapid fire presentation of 1-2 ideas

1 minute per group!



Project Timeline



Got more ideas?

- Please fill out your comment card
- Email us: 11.360@mit.edu



A photograph of a city street during the day. On the left, a row of cars is parked along the curb. Behind them are large, leafy trees. In the background, a brick building is visible. On the right side of the image, a modern building with large glass windows is partially visible. The sky is clear and bright. A semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text 'Q&A' and 'Thank You!'.

Q&A

Thank You!